

Christ Jesus a common Saviour.

A

5.

S E R M O N,

PREACHED AT THE

O R D I N A T I O N

OF THE

Reverend JOEL FOSTER,

To the Pastoral Office in NEW-SALEM,

On the ninth Day of JUNE, one Thousand seven Hundred and Seventy-nine.

By the Rev. ISAAC FOSTER, M. A.

Pastor to a Church in STAFFORD.

Printed at the DESIRE of the PEOPLE.

He died for all.

I gave all Diligence to write unto you of the common Salvation.

ST. PAUL.


ST. JUDE.

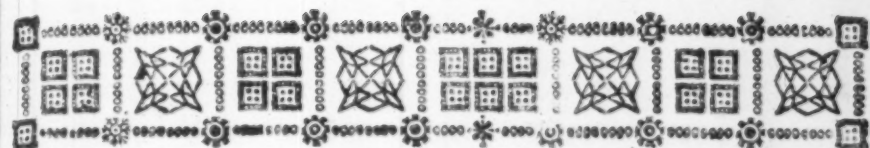
W O R C E S T E R ;

MASSACHUSETTS-BAY, Printed by L. THOMAS. 1779:

ADVERTISEMENT.

SINCE preaching this Sermon, I have been told that some in the ministry, who heard it, have murmured against the doctrine. I would hereby call upon these Gentlemen to stand forth, and before the world vindicate the contrary if they can; withal assuring them, that if it shall please God to spare my life, I will carefully consider what they have to say for their School Divinity; which to me appears as different from the divinity of the Bible, as the worship set up by Jeroboam differed from that appointed by JEHOVAH.





A N

ORDINATION SERMON.

LUKE ii. 14.

*Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace,
good-will towards men.*

EVERY step of Christ's humiliation was attended with some discoveries of his glory to ballance them; for even when he humbled himself God did in some measure exalt him, as an earnest of his future exaltation. When wrapped in swaddling clothes, and laid in a manger, who could think him the Son of God? But see him now attended with a choir of angels, and we shall say, surely in can be no other but the Son of God; concerning whom it was said, when he was brought into the world, *Let all the angels of God worship him*, Heb. i. 6. Our context acquaints us with the notice given of the arrival of this ambassador from Heaven, the Lord Jesus Christ, to certain shepherds, by the angel of the Lord, at whose presence they were sore afraid. But the

angel giving first a *supercedeas* to their fears, furnisheth them with abundant matter of joy. Context, ver. 10, *Behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to you, and not to you only, but to all people, for to you, you men, is born this day in the City of David, the place foretold by the prophets, the Saviour even Christ the Lord; and as he is the saviour of all, it is not to be kept secret, but published for the joy of all people.* No sooner had the angel delivered his message, but suddenly a multitude of the heavenly hosts appear to praise God, and congratulate men on this solemn occasion, as in the text; they give God the glory of this work; for his kindness and love designed it, and his wisdom contrived it; his other works are for his glory, but the redemption of the world is for his glory in the highest, *Glory to God in the highest!* They congratulate men on this occasion, since by Christ, the enmity that sin had raised between God and them was slain, and a peaceable correspondence resettled; *On earth peace, good-will to men.* From the sacred text I shall lay down the following doctrines to be considered at this time, viz.

That God designed the mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ for all men equally.

By the mediation of Christ, I mean, all that was incumbent on him to do and suffer, as mediator between God and man, in order to put all men into a capacity of being justified, pardoned, reconciled to, and having peace with God, upon their conversion from sin, and turning to the Lord. So that all men may upon their fulfilling the con-

ditions to be performed on their part, have an actual interest in the blessing of a Saviour.

That God thus designed the mediation of Jesus Christ for all men equally, I shall endeavour to prove at this time, and then shut up the discourse by a practical improvement. And our doctrine will appear in a clear and strong light from the following considerations, *viz.*

I. The frequent, clear and express manner in which the scriptures teach us that God would have all men be saved; (a) and that he is the Saviour of all men; (b) not willing that any should perish; (c) that by the righteousness of one, the free gift came upon all men to justification of life; (d) that Christ gave himself a ransom for all; (e) and by the favour of God tasted death for every man. (f) These are but a few of the scripture texts which expressly affirm God willing the salvation of all men; yet there are those that tell us, that God's willing the salvation of all, and Christ dying for all, intends no more, than that Christ died for some of all nations, and God wills that some of all nations should be saved. Not considering that according to their limitation, it might be more truly and properly said, that God would have all men be damned, since according to them, he has already passed a decree which renders the damnation of the greatest part of men unavoidable: And that Christ died for none, since according to them, those for whom he died are none, compared with the

(a) 1. Tim. 2. 4. (b) 1. Tim. 4. 10. (c) 2. Pet. 3. 9. (d) Rom. 5. 18. (e) 1. Tim. 2. 6. (f) Heb. 2. 9.

greater number, for whom they say he did not die. If any should say, that Christ died for his friends and for his sheep, but all are not his friends or his sheep, therefore he died not for all : I answer, it is no where said that Christ died only for his sheep and his friends ; we may therefore retort the argument, and say, he that died for his friends and enemies, for the sheep that heard his voice, and for the lost sheep that did not hearken to his voice, died for all : But Christ died for friends and enemies, for when we were enemies Christ died for us ; (g) and for his lost sheep, for he came to seek and save that which was lost ; therefore he died for all. (h)

II. The truth of our doctrine will further appear by those numerous scriptures which represent Christ the saviour of the world. Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world ; (i) This is Christ the Saviour of the world ; (k) The bread of God is he which cometh down from Heaven, and giveth life unto the world. And the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world ; (l) *We have seen and do testify that the father sent the son to be the saviour of the world ;* (m) *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through him might be saved.* (n) *I came not to condemn the world, but to save the world.* (o)

(g) Rom. 5. 8. (h) Mar. 13. 11. (i) John 1. 19. (k) John 4. 42. (l) John 6. 33, 51. (m) 1. John 4. 14. (n) John 3. 16, 17. (o) John 12. 47.

God, in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself ;
 (p) *He is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world.* (q) Now it is a doctrine held by all Protestants, in opposition to Papists, that the scriptures are clear and easy to be understood, in all things necessary to be believed. But if these places do not fully prove that Christ was given of God to be the Saviour of the whole world, there is no reason to say so. But Papists must be in the right and Protestants in the wrong. It is truly surprising that any who call themselves Protestants should tell us, that by the world, in these scriptures, we are to understand the world of the elect, who are but a small remnant. Since then it might be more truly and properly said, that God so hated the world, as that he sent not his son into the world to save the world but to condemn it. Should any say that Christ prayed not for the world in 17th of John, but for the elect only, and therefore he died not for the world but for the elect only, I would ask, how Christ came to make it our duty to pray for all men, yea, for our very enemies, and he himself neglect to do it? Further, it is evident that that very prayer in the 17th of John, was made by Christ out of love to the world ; for he prays for his apostles in particular, for this declared end, that the world might know and believe in him. See ver. 21. 23. That Christ in that chapter as expressly prays for the world, as he does for his apostles.

III. The mediation of Christ will appear to be universal, if we consider thote places of scrip-

ture which either expressly say, or by plain consequence assert, that Christ died for them that perish ; for if he died for them that perish, and for them that do not perish, he doubtless died for all. That Christ died for them that do not perish will be granted, and that he died for some that perish is easily proved from scripture, which gives the same reason to affirm that he died for all that do so. See the following scriptures. *And through thy knowledge shall thy weak brother perish for whom Christ died. (r) Destroy not him with thy meat for whom Christ died. (s)* The author to the Hebrews tells us, that if we sin wilfully, there would remain no more sacrifice for sin ; seeing such would be guilty of trampling under foot the Son of God, and counting the blood of the covenant, by which they were sanctified, an unholy thing. (t) But how could it be said that no further sacrifice for sin remains to them for whom no sacrifice was ever offered or intended ? How were they sanctified by the blood of that covenant from which they were from the foundation of the world excluded ? Or how can they neglect this great salvation, for whom it never was intended ? Furthermore, the apostle Peter tells us of some false teachers who should bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them. (u) Now from these scriptures it appears, that Christ died for them that perish, for them that shall be damned for abetting damnable heresies, he therefore died for all, and his mediation must be of universal extent.

(r) 1. Cor. 8. 11. (s) Rom. 14. 15. (t) Heb. 10. 26, 29. (u) 2. Pet. 2. 1.

IV. Further to prove the extent of Christ's mediation, I would propose to be considered, the obligation lying upon all to whom the gospel comes to believe in Christ: For if it be true, that it is the duty not only of some few, but of all to whom the gospel comes, to believe in Christ, and own him for their saviour, it must be true that he came into the world to be the saviour of all men. But what say the scriptures? *This is the work, i. e. the will of God, that you should believe in him whom he hath sent (w). If you believe not that I am he, you shall die in your sins (x). He that believeth not is condemned already (y). The same came to bear witness of the light, that all men might believe in him (z). He that believes not in him shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him (a). And when he is come, he will convince the world of sin, because they believe not on me (b). Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature, he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; he that believeth not shall be damned (c). These, are but a few of the many texts of scripture, shewing it the duty of all to believe in Christ; all which are plainly inconsistent with the doctrine of a restrained redemption to some few chosen persons; for those obliged to believe in Christ, are obliged to believe to the saving of their souls, that believing they might have eternal life (d). But all to whom the gospel comes are obliged to believe in Christ; either*

B

(w) John 6. 29. (x) John 8. 24. (y) John 3. 18. (z) John 1. 7.
 (a) John 3. 36. (b) John 16. 9. (c) Mark 16. 15, 16. (d) Heb. 10. 39.
 and John 20. 31.

therefore, Christ has purchased eternal life for all, or those that perish are obliged to believe a lie: But to say that it is the will of God that any person should believe a lie, or that the Holy Ghost convinces men of sin, because they believe not what is false, is blasphemy.

Now since the scriptures declare, that God would have all men be saved, that Christ is the Saviour of the whole world, that he died for those that perish, and that it is the duty of all to whom the gospel comes to believe in him; our doctrine, viz. that God designed the mediation of Christ for all men equally, is well founded on the word of God, and must stand or fall with the scriptures.

But this doctrine will appear still plainer, if we spend a few moments in viewing the arguments from reason for this great gospel truth.

Argument 1. If God intended not the death of Christ for the saving of any but the elect, then he never designed the salvation of the far greater part of those to whom the gospel is revealed. But if so, why is that time in which, by the revelation of the gospel, this reprobating, this damning doctrine was brought to light, stiled the time when the goodness and love of God our saviour appeared to mankind? Why, pray, do the angels sing as in the text? Why is he stiled a God rich in mercy? Why is it said that his tender mercies are over all his works? Why does the Apostle say, that God loved us first, before we loved him; when according to this doctrine, God hated the greatest part of us before we hated him, and prevented us, not with his blessing, but with subjec-

tion to an eternal curse? Why does God say that he delights in mercy? Why is the day of judgment called a revelation of the righteous judgment of God? We appeal to all reasonable beings, whether it be a righteous thing to condemn men to eternal misery for that which it was never in their power to avoid?

Argument 2. If Christ died for none but the elect, then he never intended to save any whom he doth not actually save. But why then does he say to the unbelieving Jews, *How often would I have gathered you as a hen doth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not*; and pathetically wish, that they had known in their day the things belonging to their peace. One may as well hope to reconcile light and darkness, as these words of Christ with his intention to die only for them who shall actually be saved.

Argument 3. If Christ died for the elect only, then the greatest part of those to whom the gospel comes are not bound to believe in him; for had not the Saviour come into the world, they could not have been obliged to believe in him; but surely, it is the same thing to have no Saviour come at all, as to have none for me.

Argument 4. If Christ's mediation respects the elect only, then none can be condemn'd for unbelief, because they transgress no law of God by their unbelief; for surely none will say, that God commands men to believe in Christ for salvation, for whom he never intended salvation by Christ. But why then does Christ tell the Jews, that if they did not believe he was the Christ they should die in their sins?

Argument 5. If Christ is a mediator for the elect only, then none can be rationally exhorted to believe in him. Not they who are not elected, for Christ is no Saviour for them; not the elect, for he that knows himself to be one of that number, hath believed already, and if he does not know that he has believed, he cannot know that Christ died for him, or that it is his duty to believe in Christ.

Argument 6. If Christ is not a mediator for all, then God has not provided means sufficient for the salvation of all; those therefore that are condemned at last, will be condemned for that which is no sin: For surely it is no sin in the creature, not to do that which none but God can do; but none but God can provide the means of salvation, and so every unbeliever will have a just excuse, and sufficient plea why he should not be punished, even because he never had the means of faith. If any should say that we all had strength sufficient in *Adam*, and therefore may be dealt with as if we had it still; I answer, it is false to say, that *Adam* in innocency had power to repent of sin and believe in Christ; and what he had not he could not lose for himself or posterity. *Adam* had never any more power to believe in Christ than we have.

Argument 7. The doctrine that teaches that Christ died for the elect only, is destructive of almost all the acts of piety and virtue, and therefore ought to be rejected with abhorrence by all that fear God. The apostle exhorts that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of

thanks be made for all men : But if Christ did not die for all, and God would not have all men be saved, these duties are absolutely impossible, nay, they would be very sinful. Again, it is said to be our duty to love the Lord our God ; but what motive has a reprobate to love God, whom he has shut out from his mercy, and left to perish without remedy ? And it is said to be our duty to fear God ; but in order hereto, we must be persuaded that there is forgiveness with him ; without this there can be no religious fear of God.

It would be easy to enlarge, but I must forbear, and should now proceed to apply the subject, but it will perhaps be thought that something further should be said in answer to the arguments brought by some against the doctrine of universal redemption, as I have stated it in this discourse. And the arguments against this doctrine are of two kinds ; first from scripture, and secondly from reason *. As to those pretended to be founded on scripture, they are very few ; and no wonder, as there is not a text in the Bible, that says expressly or by necessary consequence, that Christ died not for all, against those many that affirm this in express terms. But to shew how vain their pretence to scripture is, who deny the generality of Christ's mediation, I will briefly state those their arguments that have not as yet been mentioned.

1. They say, those for whom Christ died may say, *Who shall condemn us ?* according to *Rom. viii.*

* What is now offered under these two heads, was omitted when the sermon was preached for want of time, but thought best that it should be added now.

34. But all men cannot say so, therefore Christ died not for all.

Answer. There is no such proposition in the Bible as this, that all for whom Christ died may say *who shall condemn us*, but only the persons there spoken of might say this, who were the sons of God by adoption.

2. They say, all those for whom God delivered up his son, he together with him will freely give all things according to *Rom. viii. 32*. But there are many to whom God will not give all things; therefore, for none of these did God deliver up his son.

Answer. There is no such proposition in scripture as this, to all those for whom God delivered up his son, he will give all things; the text cited respects only us, *i. e.* the adopted sons of God, who have the spirit dwelling in them.

3. They say, those who by the death of Christ are reconciled to God, shall be saved by his life, according to *Rom. v. 10*. If therefore all men are reconciled to God by the death of Christ, all must be saved by his life; but all will not be saved by him, therefore all are not reconciled to God.

Answer. If it be allowed that all reconciled to God shall be saved, it is false to say, that all for whom Christ died are reconciled to God, for Christ died for them when ungodly and enemies, that they might be reconciled to God: Christ did not purchase actual reconciliation for any, but conditionally for all.

4. They say, those for whom Christ died he loved with the greatest love, this being a testi-

mony of the greatest love, according to *John xv. 13.* but thus Christ loved not all, for he doth not apply the benefits of his death to all, therefore he died not for all.

Answer. There is no such assertion in the Bible; that those for whom Christ died, he loved with the greatest love: Christ only saith, that one man shews no greater love than this to another; but this he could not say of the love of his father, and of his own love to us, for God commended his love to us, in that *when we were sinners Christ died for us, the just for the unjust.*

I have now considered all pretended from scripture against our doctrine. I shall next take a brief view of what is objected from rational accounts to the universality of Christ's redemption.

Objection 1. It is not reasonable to believe that Christ died in vain, but if he died for all he must have died in vain with respect to most.

Answer. To say that Christ died to no purpose, or to no good end, is a great absurdity; but to say, he died in vain eventually for them who will not repent and believe in him, is none at all. For all those acts of divine grace whose efficacy depends on the will of man, are too often in vain through man's wickedness. *Moses* magnifies the divine goodness, in giving his word and ordinances to *Israel*; and yet by *Jeremiah* God complains, *in vain hath he made it, the pen of the scribe is in vain.* And again, *In vain have I smitten them, they have refused to receive correction.*

Object, 2. But a general will that all men should be saved, carries some marks of imperfection in it,

as it represents God wishing something which he will not accomplish ; now an all-perfect being can wish nothing but what he can execute ; and if it be fit for him to wish it, it must be fit for him to execute it.

Answer. Hark, what say the scriptures, for thither we must resort ! *Oh, that my people had harkened to me, and Israel had walked in my ways. O that thou hadst harkened to my commandments. Oh, that they were wise that they would consider their latter end ! What could I have done more to my vineyard ? How oft would I have gathered you as a hen gathers her chickens under her wings. Oh, that thou hadst known in this thy day the things that belong to thy peace.* Will any now say, that God wills nothing but what he thinks fit to execute ; the consequence of which is, that there is no truth nor sincerity in these pathetic wishes, yea, that he is not willing any should obey his will, that do not obey it, that he is not unwilling those should sin, whom he does not restrain therefrom ; that he is not willing any should repent that do not repent, and that those that die in their iniquity do nothing contrary to the will of God. Now, will any one that fears God make an objection, of which these are the plain but dreadful consequences ?

Object. 3. *If Christ died for all men, and all are not saved, the wisdom of God must be defective and imperfect ; for to fall short of what a man intends argues a deficiency in point of wisdom.*

Answer. If God can intend nothing but what he performs, then when he forbid sin, he did not intend that any person should abstain from it who

doth not actually do so: Or when he commands repentance, holiness and obedience, he does not intend that any person should repent, be holy or obedient, who is not actually so: Surely men will never abide by such reasoning.

Object. 4. If Christ died for all men, and all men are not saved, then is not God omnipotent, since he could not apply to them the benefit he was willing should be procured for them.

Answer. Was it for want of power in Christ that he could do no mighty works in his own country, or was it the unbelief of his countrymen? It is not for want of ability or will in God that men go without his grace, but wholly owing to the unwillingness of men to receive it. *Ye will not come unto me that ye might have life. I would have purged Jerusalem, but she would not be purged.*

Object. 5. No man willingly pays a price of redemption for a captive, which he certainly knows the miserable man will never be the better for; Christ therefore paid no price of redemption for any man, who will never be the better for it.

Answer. This objection depends entirely on this proposition, viz. that God and Christ never did, or could do, that to any persons which they knew they would never be the better for. But what can be said more openly false than this? Did he not send his spirit to strive with the old world, and allow them 120 years to repent in, though he knew they would be no better for it? And does he not reveal his gospel to men, and send his ambassadors to call them to faith and repentance, whom he knows will never be the

better for it? Is ~~not~~ the gospel a favour of death to many?

This is all that I have seen advanced against our doctrine, worth taking notice of; and from hence we may see how weak the attempt that is made against it.

I shall now as proposed, shut up the discourse with a practical improvement; and this in way of address to the respective characters in this assembly. And first to my brethren in the ministry here present.

Reverend Sirs, As God had no other primary end in sending his son to be the saviour of the world, or in giving him up to death, but the glorifying himself in the salvation of men; so in putting us into the ministry, and making us his ambassadors to a lost world, he had the same end; for we are to be workers together with him, and to this very end, that he may be glorified in the salvation of those to whom we come preaching the glad tidings of salvation; to open to men the gospel way of life, and bring them heartily to approve thereof, and yield themselves unto the Lord; in a word, to persuade them to renounce sin, Satan and the world, and chuse God for their God, Christ for their Saviour, religion for their business, and Heaven for their home; is our work, and should be our great concern faithfully to do. Our own salvation, certainly depends on our being faithful to him that has called us, by exerting ourselves to the uttermost to glorify God; in promoting religion among men we shall be so, and if we are faithful, we shall undoubtedly be in a measure successful.

Now the doctrine we have been hearing will greatly assist us in our work of saving men, while the contrary doctrine tends greatly to hinder, embarrass and stop us in this good work. This will fully appear if we consider a few things, as

First, The doctrine of a general redemption layeth the greatest obligations on men to fear and serve the Lord; for if God thus loved us first, surely we are bound to love him; if Christ thus bought us with the price of his blood, we ought to glorify him with our souls and bodies which are his. God's mercifully providing a saviour for all, assures every one that there is forgiveness with him, and this is the only foundation for religion among sinners, and affords the most powerful argument for their yielding themselves to him; of this St. Paul was aware, and therefore says, *I beseech you brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.* But how can one be moved to serve God in consideration of his great mercy to him, who may doubt whether ever God intended mercy for him? And if the redemption of Christ respects only an elect remnant, may not the greatest part doubt of God's mercy and good will to them? Or how can we urge men from the consideration of God's great mercy to them, to yield themselves to him, if we may doubt whether ever God intended mercy for them? And doubt so we must, if Christ's redemption be not general.

Secondly, The doctrine of universal redemption tends to promote the glory of God far beyond the

contrary doctrine : For if to redeem any doth magnify his goodnels, to redeem many doth increase it, but to redeem all doth advance it to the highest pitch. Therefore the angels sing *glory to God in the highest !* The more are benefited the greater is the glory of the benefactor.

Thirdly, The doctrine of a general redemption doth best instruct us how to imitate the divine goodness ourselves, in seeking and procuring as much as in us lies the good of all men. We have men to deal with of very different characters and tempers, and in order to save men, we must become all things to all men, please all for their good, for edification, and often deny ourselves that we may save others. Now what so powerful to excite us hereto, as to consider that Christ our master has tasted death for every man, and God our father most earnestly desires the salvation of every man ? Further, we are to teach and exhort all, to whom we come preaching the kingdom of God, *to love their enemies, bless those that curse them, do good to those that hate them, and pray for those who despitefully use them, &c.* that they may be the children of their heavenly father : But our doctrine furnishes us with the most powerful arguments to press this extensive charity on our people ; nor could we have a face to urge them to love all, if we thought the bowels of God's love and mercy were confined to a few, lest they should exceed their pattern : For if God's love and mercy be as some pretend, limited to a few, then to love all, would not be to be like, but unlike to him:

Fourthly, Our doctrine is of great use to us in carrying on the Lord's work, as it administers just ground of comfort to the greatest sinners when under awakenings. We have some times to deal with sinners who, under the terror of God's threatenings and the convictions of their own consciences, are crying out *O miserable men that we are, what shall we do?* Would to God it were oftener the case. Now when such as these apply to us, it would be but little comfort, or rather none at all, to tell them that Christ died only for the elect, and that God will only give grace and mercy to a small remnant of men; since then the odds against them would be great, that they are not of that little number, and so their hope but little if any at all: But if we can assure them that Christ tasted death for every man, is the propitiation for the sins of the whole world; that he is interceding now in heaven for them, that God will graciously admit of the return of every prodigal to him, and while a great way off, will, like the father of the prodigal, run to meet them with supplies of grace and strength; that he exceedingly rejoiceth at the return of every lost sheep, has told us as he lives he takes the greatest pleasure in it, and that he has been thus long suffering towards them in particular, because unwilling they should perish: How will this excite joy, gratitude and praise in the poor trembling creatures, and stir them up to follow on to know the Lord!

Fifthly, The doctrine of universal redemption gives life and energy to all our exhortations to sinners to turn and live, whereas the contrary per-

suasion robs them of their strength : For if God did not will the salvation of all, if Christ did not die for all, our exhortations to our whole congregations to believe and repent would be vain and sinful ; for then we should exhort many, perhaps most, to do what God was not willing they should do, and should inform them that he wills what he doth not. We could not put the question to them, *Why will ye die ?* if we knew nothing to the contrary but that it is the will and decree of God that they should die ; nor could we blame them for neglecting the great salvation, if we had no assurance it was designed for them : But our doctrine enables us, with a good face, to enquire of sinners, why they despise the riches of that goodness which was designed to lead them to repentance, why they will die when God is so unwilling they should die. It would be easy to enlarge, but I forbear, not being so vain as to think of instructing you, Sirs, in any thing before unknown to you, but only to stir you up, together with myself, to that faithfulness now in the Lord's work, which will be our comfort in the present time, and give us boldness in the day of Christ, for whose coming let us be constantly looking, that he may appear to our salvation.

I shall now address myself to him who is this day to be separated to the work of the Christian ministry in this place.

Dear Sir, It is at your request that I perform this public part to day, you will therefore excuse a free address. The important day, Sir, is now advanced, in which you are renewedly to give

up yourself to God and this people. The work you are engaging in is one of the greatest and best in the world ; my desire and prayer is, that you may be faithful and successful in it, and if I can suggest any thing that will have a tendency to forward and assist you in it, I shall readily do it. And in the first place, take heed to *yourself*, look to the furniture of *your own* mind, and see that *you* have an inward store, are furnished with the gifts and graces of God's spirit, and especially that the spirit of love dwells richly in *you*, *love to God and love to men* ; this will be as oil to the wheels of *obedience*, this will make *your work* easy and pleasant, and you *may taste the comfort of your labours as you go along* : But without this *your work* will be *your burden*, and you will *drag on heavily* in it : Nor can it be expected that you will be *faithful in your work* unless *your heart* is in it. Take heed also to *your doctrine*, that in *doctrine* you *shew uncorruptness, gravity, sound speech that cannot be gainsayed*. That you may do so, take *your sermons out of the Bible*, never teach *for doctrine the commandments of men* ; take nothing from others upon trust, but compare what is said with the scriptures, and reject whatever does not agree with God's word, *let who will say it* ; call no man master or father on earth.

Take heed also to this flock of which you are now to take the charge, feed them with the sincere milk of the word, go before them in a holy conversation, give them an example of love to God and man, of humility, fear and heavenly

miadenedness in the day of prosperity; of meekness,
 patience and trust in God in the day of adversity :
 O how happy and comfortable for you, if able to
 say without blushing, in time to come, so walk
 as ye have me for an example. That you may
 be thus happy, let them never see any thing in
 you unworthy the man, the christian, or the
 minister : When you visit them or receive visits
 from them, see that your discourse is profitable
 and useful, learn the art to make every thing
 tend to the use of edification; always remember
 that you are sent here to lead this flock home to
 Heaven; live for them, pray, preach and watch
 for them, bear them on your heart then when
 you go in and out before the Lord, and take
 special care of the young ones, the lambs of the
 flock; often address them on the great affairs of
 eternity, in public and private; *you are young
 yourself*, and perhaps *young ones* will hear a word
from you that may do them good. To quicken you
 to *lay out yourself* to save this flock, often call to
 mind that inestimable price with which *they were
 bought*, even the blood of the son of God. The
 souls now to be committed to *your charge*, are
 of such worth that the Lord Jesus willingly laid
 down his life for them. *Do you love the Lord
 Jesus?* then you will count nothing too much
 to do to save the price of his precious blood, but
 will feed his sheep, and feed his lambs. Your
 work is great, but to encourage you, remember,
 if *you are faithful* your reward will be proporti-
 onably great : And as your work is great, so the
 difficulties attending of it are great; the flock of

God which you are about to take the oversight of is large, *many* are the souls to be committed to *your charge* ; O remember their worth ! have a tenderness for *every one of them*, they are the price of your master's blood : Your private applications will require much time, pains and skill ; your preparations for the sanctuary, and your public ministrations, bespeak hard study and much labour ; beside you are to expect in the course of your ministry, to meet with much difficulty from the frowardness and obstinacy, the pride and prejudice, the passions and lusts of men ; the wickedness of some, and weakness of others, you may expect will bring you much trouble, *nor may you expect to find the end of your troubles until death shuts up the scene*. It is not with pleasure, dear Sir, that I mention these things to you, it is not to discourage or cast a gloom on your mind, or increase your burden now when entering on your work ; no Sir, it is to point you forward to that rock, where alone you will find strength and relief, and to prevent your being offended when troubles come : Go forth to your work in the name and strength of the Lord Jesus ; this day enter into his vineyard and join your fellow-labourers, in reliance upon his grace ; we that have entered before you, bid you welcome, and tell you, that you have to serve the best of masters, who is able and will support you in all your tribulations, have your eyes to him, make supplication to him, cast your burden upon him, for verily he is our strength and our redeemer : Let your sufferings be for righteousness sake, for

your inviolable attachment to truth and duty, and in the assurance of this, be patient in sufferings, in goodness resolute, and if storms gather round and swell to a tempest, look forward to the crown at the end of the race, and for the *joy set before you* endure the cross and despise the shame.

With God I leave you, to his grace I commend you, may he keep you from falling, and present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.

The address turns to the Lord's flock in this place. *Beloved in Christ Jesus*, The great and good shepherd of the sheep has shewn his mindfulness of this his flock, in leading you to the choice of one to break the bread of life to you, and inclining him to accept an invitation to settle with you in the christian ministry, who is now to be *set over you in the Lord*: Brethren, receive him as one of the ascension gifts of our dear Lord, and may he come to you in the fulness of the gospel blessings. I trust you are in a good measure sensible of the greatness of his work, and the difficulties that attend it; wherefore pray for him brethren, strengthen and encourage him in his work; you may expect to get much good by your minister, if *you are much in prayer* for him; but if by hard usage, groundless jealousies and complaints, you weaken his hands, and discourage his heart, you must not expect to profit by the word he preaches, but it will doubtless prove a *savour of death to you*; be careful that you never become an enemy to him because he *tells you the truth*; dont you expect that he bears an open testi-

mony against all wickedness, and encourages and promotes religion and virtue among you? When therefore he says unto the wicked, *O wicked man thou shalt surely die*, do not be angry with him, for necessity is laid upon him, and woe to him if he neglect to warn the wicked: When he tells *prayerless families* and *prayerless persons*, that God will pour out his wrath on them, believe it and reform, when he tells such as turn their backs on the Lord's table, that in so doing they *practically deny Christ*, believe him and do so no more; when he tells such as neglect baptism for their children, that they are liable to be disowned by Christ for want of his mark, and in danger of perishing with their houses for want of an ark, believe him and reform; when he tells you that you were *every one* bought with the precious blood of Christ, that you are not *your own*, but his that bought you, that you are bound to glorify and serve him, and that your not doing so, but living in sin, is against the will of God, who desires the salvation of *every one of you*, though you are trampling under foot the blood of his dear son, which was shed for all. Do not object hereto, those popish opinions of the absolute election of a definite number to eternal life, and Christ's dying only for them. These are doctrines midwived into the world by dreaming monks about the ninth century, and in their consequences destructive of all religion.

In a word, when he tells you, that God will be to each one of you as you are to one another, that *the measure you mete to others, God will measure*

to you again, that you must do as you would be done by, or you cannot be Christ's disciples, that it is vain to cry *Lord! Lord!* if you do not the things that Christ has commanded, believe him and turn your feet into wisdom's ways, and let your whole conversation be directed by the gospel of Christ, as you hope for salvation through him. Brethren it is my earnest desire and prayer that your minister may be a blessing to you and your children for a great while yet to come; that you may be a kind, charitable and comfortable people to him; that your triumphing souls may be his crown another day: And that it may be so, see that you live in love and peace, love God; love one another, love your minister, and be at peace among yourselves. Love is the bond of perfectness, the Hebrew word which we translate *Salem*, signifies in that language both peace and perfection: Brethren, let love and peace abound in your Salem, and this will render you as perfect and happy as this state of trial will admit of, and intitle you to that blessed world of love and peace which awaits all that fear God. To which happy state and place, may you and your minister at last arrive, and there find every good beginning of grace here, made perfect in glory.

One word to this great assembly, and I have done. *Dear friends*, As this is the first, so probably it will be the last opportunity that ever I shall have of speaking to many here present, or seeing you again in this world; and since I am now to take leave of you for time, not expecting to see many of you again until the Heavens be

no more, you will allow me to speak to you with all the freedom, concern, zeal and earnestness of a *dying man*, who is to speak his last, to speak for *eternity* ! and especially when you consider that the subject I shall now address you upon, does not relate to the perishing things of this world, but to the all-important concerns of *your never dying souls*, and the world to come ; and being a christian people, I must suppose you believe the gospel, and are expecting those events therein foretold, big with your eternal fate, will therefore hear like dying men, who believe a judgment to come, and expect soon to give an account to the judge of all the earth, how you have heard and attended to me, while endeavouring to *persuade you* to love and serve God, from the consideration of the great things that have been done *by God your father*, in choosing *you in Christ* before the foundation of the world, to the enjoyment of visible church privileges, that you might be holy here, and happy forever hereafter ; by Christ your Saviour, in giving up his life that you might live through him, and of what he is doing now in Heaven, while pleading on *your behalf* the merits of his precious blood ; by the holy and blessed Spirit, in knocking at the door, and striving with you, in order to apply the benefits of Christ's redemption *to you*. But notwithstanding all that has been done, is it not true of *many* that hear me, that to this day they have never been persuaded to accept *the mercy that is fully offered* ? And yet a long suffering God still waits to be gracious. and is now

calling to *you* to turn and live ! Can you find it in your hearts to slight God's electing love, by neglecting the gospel salvation, and abuse his patience in waiting, by continuing still in sin ? Can you set light by those precious souls, and follow courses that will end in their destruction, when the son of God prized them at such a rate as to die for them ? Can you think of grieving the blessed spirit of God, who is striving to *apply the benefits of Christ's redemption to you*, by continuing still in sin ? *O the black ingratitude that such are guilty of !* Blush, O Heavens, and be astonished O earth, be desolate and afraid ye mountains, at such wretched, brutish, barbarous wickedness ! But consider now at last, of what importance it is that you bestir in the affair of *your salvation* ; time is short, death, judgment and eternity near, the present moment is all that we can call our own ; *now, therefore, is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.* Now, this moment life and death are set before you, *and you are to have as you choose ; to reap in eternity as you now sow ;* God has done all that he can to *save you*, all now depends upon you ; if *you stretch forth the withered hand* it shall be restored, or otherwise not : *If you look you shall see*, or otherwise remain blind. God never absolutely elected any person to eternal life, nor has Christ by his death absolutely purchased pardon and life for any one, but conditionally for all, having by his death put all men in a capacity of being justified and pardoned, upon their turning from sin to God ; God is ready, Christ is ready, behold Heaven is ready,

all things ready, done and prepared on God's side to save you, and you have it this moment in the power of your hands to make yourselves *happy or miserable for eternity* as you shall choole, to render the death of Christ of the greatest benefit, or altogether in vain as to you: Not one to whom I am speaking but may rise to heavenly blessedness, you want no power to go up and possess the blessed world where God the Father dwells: only improve the talent you have, and I will give more grace and more strength, that you shall mount up with wings as eagles, *run and not be weary, walk and not be faint*, overcome every difficulty, vanquish every enemy, and soon come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy on your heads. Can you hesitate a moment which to choose, whether Heaven or Hell, life or death, God's favour or his wrath, the blessed society of saints and angels, or the cursed company of devils and damned spirits? O how inexcusable will you be found at last, if you should perish after all that has been done for your salvation? *Why then will ye die?* God your maker is loath you should die, Jesus Christ your Saviour has died that you might live, and is now interceding for you in Heaven. *O turn ye, turn ye! for why will ye die? Cast away your abominations and serve the Lord, cease to do evil and learn to do well*, break off all your sins, and seek God in the way he has appointed; in a word, believe Christ's gospel and do its duties, and you shall have power to become the sons of God.

Methinks I hear some of you saying, *Is all this*

*true that we hear this day ? Did thoughts of love
 to us warm the heart of God and Christ from eter-
 nity ? Did the blessed Lord Jesus bleed, groan and
 die for us ? Is God waiting that he might be gra-
 cious to us ? Is Christ knocking at our door, and
 the blessed Spirit striving with us ? Is every thing
 done, ready and prepared on God's part for our sal-
 vation, and does all now wait for us ? Lord we
 yield ourselves captives to thy rich grace and free
 mercy ; we throw down our weapons of rebellion,
 and submit ourselves conquered by thy love, we come
 unto thee for thou hast the words of eternal life ;
 other lords have had dominion over us, but we re-
 nounce them, and will serve Jehovah and him on-
 ly. Thus do and live, abide by this resolution,
 and the Lord will be with you ; and though we
 see one another no more until the last great day,
 you shall then be found among Christ's sheep,
 and the judge will say unto you, well done good
 and faithful servants, enter into the joy of your
 Lord. Which God grant for Jesus sake. AMEN.*